

## **Miami News Record**

### **Pair concerned about upcoming school remediation**

By Krista Duhon

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Two Picher residents told Ottawa County Commissioners Monday "enough is enough" and there has to be a better way to handle waste material from area remediation projects.

The duo also wanted to know if the county is footing the bill to maintain a road used to truck the material into their town.

Gene Ragsdale and Phillip Johnson of Picher asked District 1 Commissioner John Clarke if he had plans to pave Douthat Road, a northeast Ottawa County road leading to a contaminated sludge pond intended as a repository for Miami's contaminated materials.

The sludge pond, according to Clarke, is a site which the Department of Environmental Quality, the Environmental Protection Agency and CH2MHILL, the contractors of a Miami remediation project scheduled to start this month, say will be filled and capped with lesser contaminated material from other locations in the county.

"Not only do I not have time to pave the road, but I don't think it is worth it to the citizens of the district to pave a road leading to a contaminated dump site," Clarke said. "There will never be any development there."

Clarke said environmental officials decided to use the sludge pond as a repository for Miami's contaminated soil in order to contain hazardous materials to one area of the county.

Johnson said he is not necessarily opposed to the site being used as a repository, but indicated the idea of just dumping waste into the sludge pond is not going to work.

Ragsdale told commissioners that filling the sludge pond with more contaminated soil is only going to force more hazardous material into Tar Creek.

"Why don't they just dump it straight into the Neosho ... it will get there faster," Ragsdale said.

Both of the Picher men said the site should be lined and a settling pond or trap designed to catch the heavy metals.

"It should have been done a long time ago," Ragsdale said. "It looks like we are going to have to stay in Picher and we have had enough. We are the ones who will have to breath it in."

Commission Chairman James Leake said the county had no authority in the matter involving the pond which is located on private property.

Clarke said he had spoken with CH2MHILL last week on a separate matter and the issue of Douthat Road came up.

"They asked me to pave the road and I told them I had no desire to do that. If they want to pave it ... I will allow it," Clarke said. "But, it will have to be done to my specifications and they will have to do the work at their own expense."

In other matters the board:

- Approved the allocation of \$5,500 toward the purchase of a non-aggressive drug dog for the sheriff's department.
- Opened bids for a 4x4 patrol unit and two detective cars for the sheriff's department.
- Voted to proceed with plans to include an option to repeal a portion of personal property taxes on the November ballot. A resolution and proposed question will be voted on at the July 22 meeting of the commissioners.
- Approved a notice to proceed and authorized a grant for modifications to the Ottawa County Boys and Girls Club restrooms.
- Discussed new representation of AFLAC insurance. No action was taken.
- Approved a janitorial subcontract between the Ottawa County Health Department and Nancy Davis.
- Approved juvenile detention facility contracts for new fiscal year.